

Brookland/Bunker Hill

Week 1

- Why Closing Schools?
We need two times the space needed, no community benefits, and steer the money towards the children and not infrastructure.
- Closed Schools near Metros?
- What happens to Staff?
- Assess the students first. 1- Core knowledge 2- Why can't teachers be trained – They can be.
- Is this the final plan? If so, are we wasting our time?
No, it comes out in January. We will take all issues and re-evaluate.
- Will Parents have say – we want parents to be on Design Committee –
Written guarantee return to Brookland – No staff leaves – Consolidate will include both principals?
Need to know what designs will work for PK-8
- Why can't DCPS market and fund Bunker Hill?
Need to have a model principal to do that for the school, to allow an increase in numbers. Frankly, DCPS does a terrible job at this. Charter schools do a much better job at this.
- Was a parent panel involved?
- Bunker Hill – We have “core knowledge” curriculum – Why change?
Use this knowledge for 3-4's. Combine tech and core knowledge.
- Why Brookland and not Bunker Hill?
- What about middle school children with young children?
In this process there will be no new students, so students will continually know each other, and can types of mentors. Also, we better get to know families and parents under this system.
- Brookland open school – doesn't work?
Build new school on the Brookland site. Bunker Hill is a better site, become recreation center at Brookland – Bunker Hill forms triangle in neighborhood?
- Taft built for older children?
- Where are the results of the Janey surveys?
- What happened to re-enrollment – what's the right size?
- Do you guarantee these comprehensive resources if schools are combined and reduced?
We can say 100% that we will close schools in FY08, but can't say that all resources will be in place. However, you will feel the difference.
- DCPS has base curriculum, right?
- Hate to lose Brookland open rooms, students move and progress?
- Will we make these changes with PK-8's in ward 5 and then have to come back?
- We need to see the savings and where it goes.

- Pre-K to 8 models: Crowd wondered if this was already approved (as they thought it was) then why are we reopening after all the votes have been final. Wonder why we can't now move on to *how*.
- Can't we build an on-going process with parents at this point?
- Want representatives at meetings (PTA, etc...)?
- What will your marketing plan be?
- What are the pros of new vs. expanding Bunker Hill?
- Have you done the traffic and corridor studies and will you share them?
- Can we get architectural plans?
- We want Specificity – What programs, then we can discuss site?
- How do you plan to address all our children – Differentiated education plans?
- Can you give us nationally piloted programs – what is available?
- Why they are closing and what will happen to employees? Are the plans set?

Response: Parents to have a say how building is designed for Bunker Hill parents and Brookland? Want a guarantee that they will return to Brookland site...written document.

Staff to remain intact to follow kids, not to lose jobs; both sets of teachers consolidation...in writing?

- Wasting time of parents? Finalized? Why can't resources (DCPS) assist marketing of schools?
- Changing curriculum? How is it going to affect kids? Younger and older kids being together is a concern? Why Brookland over Bunker Hill site? (Bunker Hill seems to some like the safer place for their children)
- Taft as an elementary is a concern; never been an elementary. BH was built for elementary. Everything would have to be redone for elementary school age.
- Past superintendent had community meetings and surveys; what happened to results?
- Parents were in favor of K-5 elementary and middle school 6,7,8 and 9 in high schools...now why are we moving to pre K-8?
- What about bullying?
- How would the transition for younger students be, having to be in school with older children? Overcrowded, now with lower enrollment now concern? So which way to go? Which problem is worse?
- Will there be a Parent Panel involved? If so, what wards?

Answers and Discussion:

Is plan set? No, we need to hear from community first, to hear if missed and how people prioritize. We will explain and want to hear your take. Will be final in January.

Why closing? Referencing written packet...twice as much space as we need, not closing all and reality is we have to close some to deliver type of programming we are proposing. We believe there is no alternative to keep all open.

Some of the schools closing are near metro stop...major concern?
We aren't putting metro proximity as a major reason for not closing a school. We close, so all can get art, music, etc...not fair to kids.

Why Brookland over Bunker Hill? Brookland site next to Turkey Thicket, stronger site...open space building would not work...build a new building on that site. Open space is problematic...right now, Brookland to BH become one, infuse new programming. Only preK to K programming now.

One participant felt small meeting is good, because in previous didn't take anything back.

First couple of months, pre-K not having aides, looking at BH can house and have enough aides? Combine both, use both or hire additional?

Issue of aides: Money issue and depleted student body issue. Part of this effort to get principles out of choice to be without things. With more students the money flows with students. Principals make the decision.

Point: BH has more students but more aides. Principals' decision and budget is the answer.

Will we be involved in design? Redesign safe traffic ways, etc. Model is to have parents involved with educational specs. What design works for pre K to 8. There are ways to design a school.

Pre K to 8: Best way and one the chancellor advocates, when you grow upper grades. Get to know the parents. Students got along in this culture because already knew each other. Good and Bad ways to implement and insist on the Good ways. Median class size of a projected class is low. WTU contract has certain standards, standards don't change.

Staff, what will be done with them and how will handle this? Look at kids first and then look at staff to match those needs. Might reveal, we need more staff with specific knowledge. Look at the needs of students. Some staff might now that design isn't for them.

Are curriculums the same? No. Brookland is technology rich and core knowledge at BH; it can be a leadership decision. Joint decision of who should do what, no one needs to make it for them.

Different models and some parents feel that both models could complement one another.

Why can't DCPS market? BH walked door-to-door to get people to come. Only schools to have increased enrollment. That is a model for us, however, we are still not there. So many under enrolled, not feasible.

Does DCPS Market for residence in Ward? We do a terrible job! We don't market enough! Charter schools do it, we don't. Parents need DCPS help!

Are these schools being penalized cause they don't have resources, however, are they saying we need these things? We can't give it to you so will we suffer? Yes, to all questions; we want to deliver, but can't deliver because of building space and empty square footage.

Does this consolidation guarantee this? We can't guarantee 100%, but it is what we are working towards. We want to give children the opportunity.

Questions to Chancellor Rhee

Curriculum? Throughout DCPS there should be one curriculum? Consolidation of open space and closed space, what will you do? When decline in households, not necessarily so? Kids are here, and have options, but need to be better. We want the programs and we will hold you accountable. Plan that doesn't look different at the end of the day. We should have options, so if we don't think open space is good for child then child can go somewhere for options.

Chancellor Rhee comments: This city gives parents options. Choice has in the past gone to only certain affluent children. Now there is a choice. We want to create options, so any parent would feel good. This system should ensure that every single child has an option, regardless of what the community and parents can do. Charter schools recruit and do other things well...so, DCPS needs to do a much better job. Nowhere will everyone 100% agree, but we are trying to give to all. Our dollars give our schools options, every dollar put in needs to be felt by students. This is the process, a proposal, but the final decision will be middle to late January.

Q: Our kids are different everywhere, we want differences, not all pre K to 8; do we have that?

Chancellor Rhee comments: Having these forums are important, and we have a mix.

Q: Bunker Hill to Brookland not set in stone?

Chancellor Rhee comments: Decisions have not been made...just proposal and a lot of knowledge went into it. This is the reason we have forums; people are giving us really good input, that will shape decisions.

Q: Pro PreK to 8, now combining all to pK to 8, are we going to be the same with what we have now? Not everyone fits...have you researched?

Chancellor Rhee comments: I can see keeping a child in school, because of pre-K to 8, we will retain more students. We can never say beyond a doubt what will play out but this is what research says works.

O: Are you going to unveil the financial savings?

Chancellor Rhee comments: Preliminary projections are saving \$23 million to go back into the schools, and is a significant amount of money. We are now running twice as many schools in the system, nationwide equivalence. All is possible when we have right number of schools.

Other Questions:

- Bunker Hill to preserve? BH is poorly designed, and spend too much recreating?
- Pre K to 8 models?
- How to get people from DCPS into PTA meetings?
- Problem is, already been approved, because there was a vote, City Council voted on Master Facility Plan already!?

The Board of Education and Council voted on the initial version under the previous administration, but are some differences. Proposed closures last year, next stage-go to the community and official hearing in Jan. None of the approval means we have to do it; however, not closing is not an option. More open is which direction we are going.

- Are you going to do whatever you want?
Ultimately will be influenced, but will be by mayor's and chancellor's decision.
- What will marketing plan be?
- Why are we rebuilding? Seems like a waste of money? Don't see Brookland expansion and have the arts and community? Brookland location doesn't provide?
- Which school is more feasible for expansion and building facility...safety...etc.?
- What is the pilot of what we want...what programs?
Next round of meetings is academic-specific.
- Are there nationally piloted programs that do work? Yes. Let's get to the next step.

Browne/Young, Week 1
December 11, 2007

Comments about the school:

- Young is a “safe haven.”
- Concerned about mixing grades K-8.
 - Don’t want 8th graders with little kids—all kinds of issues brought to little kids
 - How will the principal be able to deal with both elementary and middle school students, if that is not their experience?
- Which school is sending, which is receiving?
- Schools will be too small for all the special needs students.
- How will staffing take place?
- Will facilities be ready by September?
- What does the community want the excess space to be used for?
- Wouldn’t we have to double or triple the staff, since DCPS and these schools are already understaffed?
 - Art teachers, special education teachers, play therapists, behavior intervention specialists, psychologists, social workers.
- Teachers/parents describe the students as a “fragile population.”
- I want a parent center.
- The closings as “a major crisis in the area.”
- We want to see “improved facilities like Noyes.”

Comments about the community:

- Will there be another round of school closings?
 - Why is Spingarn not scheduled for enhancements?
- Community members are attached to their alma mater; school pride
 - People don’t understand what the schools mean for their community
- Community of “schools on the hill.”
- Some schools are historic architecture buildings.
- They don’t know our community.
- Let the principals have the same opportunity, money, control as the charter schools.
- Will the city sell the buildings?

Comments about the process:

- Why is the meeting not in Browne or Young?
- I felt blindsided.
 - Said it was workable, doable
 - Worried about losing students
 - Worried about bumping staff, who would be principal?
- It seems like proposal is already done.
- I don’t trust the process.

- Why is there only one meeting being held for these wards.
- Proposal sent to business, trade associations before presented to community
- They want the buildings.
 - Charter schools were asked which building they want.
- There are hidden facts, Fenty is not transparent.
- If the mayor fails, black people get blamed.
- There will be a nasty recall on January 15th.
- What is the long-term plan for the proposal?
 - What happens if/when the population goes up?
- I want to see “real faces” of chancellor and deputy mayor
- I was not included
- You did not come to our community.

Burroughs, Week 1
December 11, 2007

- Do not like the separation of schools into different rooms (at the meeting).
- DCPS is taking advantage of the folks in the community.
- DCPS hasn't been to civic association, other meetings around, and you haven't been in the schools.
- Environment at Taft is unhealthy and unsafe. There is asbestos at Taft.
- You have **seven** charter schools sitting right across the bridge on 7th Street. You are going to get developers from charter schools to come into our buildings. What do you think we think you are going to do to our schools when they are closed, when you allowed a school in my community to be turned into condos?
- It has nothing to do with the school, it has to do with safety. 5D needs to close the open-air drug market.
- This process does not factor in enough time to seriously take community input into account.
- What is going to happen to classroom size?
- What other options have you taken into account?
- Why are you focusing on concentrating our resources, instead of expanding upon the things that are working?
- What about the lease for 825 N. Capitol?
- Why pre-K with 8 at same school when we have great program for elementary students?
- Comment from Ward 5 resident:
There is nothing new with what is going on right now. There was a certain honesty about the situation in the past, though. The land value was what mattered, not the programs, and I think that was told to us up-front. I think you (the chancellor) owe me some thanks for keeping open the school that your children attend (Oyster). You may think that as administrators of the school system, you are educating our children. But it is parents, teachers, principals who educate the children, and you can't yank them out of the ground they are in and move them somewhere else and expect them to be successful. Schools and programs are rooted in communities if

they are successful. This was popped on us at the beginning of Christmas season, which is the time that is most difficult for us to do something about it. First told that decisions had to be made very quickly...now we are told to keep talking, that these aren't the last steps in the process. Six weeks, especially when two are vacation weeks, is not enough time for getting the appropriate input. If that's the case, you are not being serious about taking parental input into account; the decision has already been made.

- PTA President of Burroughs-
You (DCPS) have a plan, but Burroughs administration, community, teachers, students have their own plan.
Our proposal is to:
Keep the existing Burroughs structure and programs;
Bunker Hill and Brookland share facilities until massive renovations on Brookland are complete;
Slowe will consolidate with Burroughs (and be housed in the Burroughs building);
All 6th grade classes in Ward 5 should be closed and consolidated and moved to new building;
Taft will be comprised of 6-8 grades (that's important to us because Thurgood Marshall is K-8, they can't even get resources from this administration; so how will it work for us?)
- When schools decide to merge, what's going to happen with Bunker Hill and Brookland students (since JB is not moving, it's going to stay the way that it is)...what about the rest of those kids who are going to be moved, how are they going to be transported? 6-8 is the best thing for your plan. Pre-K through 5th grade is best at Burroughs.
- How much is being spent on revitalization? How much is being saved? What's going to happen to classroom size? What other options have been explored? And why does this have to happen so abruptly? Why is it when something is working, you want to destroy it? You should build on it and invest in it.
- These days there are junior high school kids who are dropping out of school. How about developing resources, not concentrating them? What about offering community service in high schools? Major issue is that rather than talking about improving quality of education, you are only talking about closing schools. It's an insult to approach this issue by dividing us all (into different rooms). This one example of attempting to communicate is not sufficient.
- When Banneker was put together, best students and teachers were put together. When Duke Ellington was put together, the community was involved. I said I would not send my granddaughter to Taft because I know

that it's in a bad neighborhood. How can people in your positions even consider sending a child down to Taft? Even the police can't clean up Taft.

- Ms. Rhee's claims (on her resume) have not been substantiated or proven. My question is this...you keep talking about the process, initiatives, vague statements of success...but there is no specificity to this. If your background is in working with urban students, you should be able to tell us more about what you are going to do. The chancellor lists some phenomenal accomplishments here, why can't she articulate that to us? What about middle and high school students? What about lack of parental involvement? Those external issues are impacting graduation rates, reading, writing, ability to get jobs. Another thing I have an issue with...you are coming to us, but your body language is very offensive. If you are genuinely interested in people's concerns, you aren't going to view me with smug, patronizing disposition.
- I want to know if you are going to engage in this same kind of forum at the next meeting. For instance, are you going to discuss Burroughs, or are you going to just discuss all schools you are closing? I don't think people are ready for that (discussion of programs) now, as they aren't completely satisfied with the "why." Need to understand more about the closings themselves.
- Reason that you are getting this response...you should have done this process first before you created the list. You seem sneaky and underhanded. You first need to do something that shows us that you can be trusted. You have not done your homework. You just recently put a lot of money into renovations of Burroughs. It's fine if you are closing schools that have problems. But Burroughs isn't one of them. You tell teachers and principals that their jobs are safe, but then you go behind their backs and don't include them in the planning process. I don't believe that you are going to take my interests into consideration. I have not seen Mayor Fenty's face at any of these meetings. We voted him in, we can vote him out. Michelle and Victor responded to me personally, but Mayor Fenty has not responded. We want to hear from him, not his representatives. We don't trust him or his administration.
- Why Taft? The urgency of the moment is vocational education. Do you have any schools in DCPS training students re: vocations?
- Parent involvement is the key. What is going to happen to the teachers? We need to make our voices heard and they will try to work with us. Please listen to the parents.
- What are your specific plans for the Burroughs building? We already know what the absolute best use of the building is. We are not moving from that

building. There is no reason for us to be removed from that building. This is a life or death situation. That is a public building, and we will not be moved.

- Kids are moving to charter schools. This is what's hurting us. There is no reprieve from charter schools for the next two years. Charter schools are big business. As far as Burroughs is concerned, I would hate to see students removed, but if we really want to save our system, we need to address the charter school issue.
- How are you going to fund this staffing model? How are the closings directly related to the funding of the staffing model? How are we going to still fund public school programs if charters are taking money out of the system?
- Where will the kids at LaSalle go when you close Backus? There's no middle school there for those kids either.
- Where is the research on the K-8 combination being successful? The original MFP right-sized the school district. The option that you have benefits the developers because it frees up the land. What will you do with the facilities after they are closed? Take government facilities and move them into the schools.
- Burroughs is one of the best schools in Ward 5. You aren't coming with a plan that shows you know where you are going; every two weeks there are new plans as to where Chancellor Rhee wants to go. Take some of the buildings that you are going to close, and put staff from 825 in them. Need a plan to utilize these buildings.
- I want to thank you for taking the time to take us on. We've got a lot to lose, and we are just passionate right now. I have one child in private and one in public school. I decided to put my child in Burroughs, and got involved, because I believe that if a parent gets involved, the school will be successful. You work for us, we work with you, and please don't forget it. We respect you; respect us.

JF COOK, Week 1
December 11, 2007

Participant works across the street from JF Cook at ARE, an aftercare provider. She had two concerns regarding the proposed closing of JF Cook:

1. She warned about the danger of children crossing the very busy streets in the area – New York Avenue, New Jersey Avenue, North Capitol Street, and Florida Avenue – in the event they had to attend a different school, such as Walker Jones. Her concern would be alleviated if bus transportation were provided.
2. She said that if Cook ES closes, then ARE (her employer) might very well go out of business. ARE provides aftercare for Cook, Ballou, and other DCPS schools. Because Cook is its largest program, ARE may be forced to shut down, thus depriving the other DCPS schools of aftercare services.

M.M. Washington, Week 1
December 11, 2007

Questions Raised:

- Can someone from DCPS come to M.M. Washington and talk with staff and students?
- Additional information should be distributed when you walk through the doors of these types of meetings;
- Everyone should all meet together 1st, all parents especially;
- Parents are the last to know about school closings;
- All of the schools should be at the table re: renovations, receiving schools etc.
- Will students from M.M. Washington have a choice of moving to one of the three schools?
- What will happen to staff with excess teachers?
- Will teachers be fired, transferred or are you offering an early out?
- What about co-teaching?
- Will MM Washington students have special priority in enrolling in other schools?
- Will there be an application process?
- Are you going to expand the programs?
- What will be the percentage of acceptance?
- Will Phelps be considered a neighborhood school?
- Will students have to apply to Phelps?
- Will Phelps and M.M. Washington be joined together?
- Why not fix up MM Washington, make it better for the students and staff-maybe a little cosmetics is needed.
- There are unique things about each school, why M. M. Washington?
- Why was MM Washington chosen out of all the other DCP schools?
- Are we selling our school system out to Charter Schools?
- All of them are a joke; T-9 didn't work, No Child Left Behind, it's all about the dollars.
- How did a charter school renovate part of our building? (Roosevelt Parent).
- What is the fluent movement, so students won't get lost in all the suffering around?
- How many people here have children who attend a DC Public School?
- Do the mayor's and chancellor's kids attend DC Public Schools?
- Buildings don't change, people change;
- A "hotline for rumor control" is needed;
- Will the intact programs move to one site or will the programs move to several school sites?
- Listing of traditional high schools and vocation high schools? Or are there any?
- A listing of all Career Technical Programs in all DCPS's.

- What is there to do with a student who's not progressing?
- Can the restructuring cancel out what we are talking about now?
(Roosevelt Parent)
- Duke Ellington School of the Arts is never on a Closed School List.
- Parents chose M.M. Washington, it has a more personal environment.

Top Concerns:

- School employees are asked to do too much.
- What's going to happen to the building?
- Class sizes are too large; kids are not grasping their skills because of the class size.
- Renovate and bring the building up to par.
- Keep the programs.
- MM Washington is an historical landmark.
- Why not fix up the school?
- Stop taking away from the students.
- Having small kids and larger kids together.
- Losing the small school setting.
- No one has taken into consideration where students reside.
- Who's responsible for student's transportation?
- There is a problem with putting special education students in the basement area at MM Washington with no air circulation and no windows. Someone should take the blame for this, but no one is admitting to the error.
- When are we getting answers to these questions?